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SENATE PANEL MAY TIGHTEN REINS ON CIA

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WASHINGTON, April 26 — A small group of Senators responsible for monitoring the Central Intelligence Agency met yesterday to discuss whether their watchdog committee should be enlarged. They discussed also whether they should tighten their surveillance of the agency.

The bipartisan group is made up of ranking members of the Armed Services Committee and the appropriations subcommittee, dealing with funds for the armed services.

For many years the Senate group and a comparable group in the House, also drawn from the Armed Services and Appropriations committees, have constituted the only legislative overseer of the secret operations and the secret funds of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Expansion Urged

For many years also, a large number of Senators and Representatives have urged that these two groups be expanded to include members of the Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs committees so that the activities of the CIA could be subjected more closely to political considerations.

Although Senator Richard B. Russell (Dem.), Georgia, chairman of the armed services committee and the watchdog committee, has resisted these suggestions, informed sources said he called yesterday's meeting to consider such an ex-

pansion.

These sources said that two recent disclosures of CIA activities appeared to have brought the issue to a head in the Senate watchdog group.

Fulbright Letter

The first was the disclosure that at least five CIA agents operated in South Viet Nam in the late 1950s as employees of a multimillion-dollar technical assistance program conducted by Michigan State University for the government of the late Viet Namese President, Ngo Dinh Diem.

The second was the disclosure that the CIA has interceded in the slander trial of one of its agents, Juri Raus, an Estonian refugee, who is being sued by Erik Helne, another Estonian emigre. Helne charged that Raus had publicly called him a Soviet intelligence agent.

Several days ago Senator J. William Fulbright (Dem.), Arkansas, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote to Russell suggesting that they discuss the possibility of having representatives from his committee on the watchdog group. It could not be learned whether Russell had replied to this letter.

Offers Resolution

Senator Eugene J. McCarthy (Dem.), Minnesota, and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, has expressed concern that the CIA "is making foreign policy and in so doing is assuming the roles of President and Congress."

McCarthy has introduced a resolution calling for a "full and complete" study by a special subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee on the effect of CIA operations on policy-making. He also favors expanding the present watchdog group to include members of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Senator Mike Mansfield (Dem.), Montana, the majority leader, said that the proposal to widen the watchdog committee was "not a bad idea." Besides Russell, the present watchdog committee is made up of Democrats John Stehnis of Mississippi, Carl Hayden of Arizona, Stuart Symington of Missouri, and Republicans Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, Milton R. Young of North Dakota and Margaret Chase Smith of Maine.

*McCarthy, Eugene
Russell, Richard
Mansfield, Mike*